

Town of Rowe – FY2013
Board of Selectmen – Minutes
Tuesday, October 30, 2012 – 6:00pm
Rowe Town Hall

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman McLatchy at 6:00pm.

Present: Vice Chairman Paul McLatchy III and Selectman Marilyn Wilson

Absent: Chairman Noel Abbott

Audience: Ann Foshay, Lisa Miller, Ed May, Cindy Laffond, Lisa Danek-Burke, Myra Carlow, Becky Richardson, Jodi Brown, Rosie Gordon

Audience of Citizens: Selectman Wilson announced that, as voted at last week's meeting, the "audience comment" portion of the meetings would be limited to 10 minutes at the beginning of the meeting, with a 2 minute maximum for each citizen. If during the meeting citizens have questions, she suggested they write them down during the meeting and ask them at the end of the meeting when a final comment session could be held.

- **Becky Richardson** stated that at last week's School Committee meeting they talked about demolition of the school building and the need for a new school. She asked, in knowing that, is anything that is looked at to build automatically going to include a school building? Vice Chairman McLatchy responded, yes. She further asked—will the School Building Committee look at a variety of options as far as cost is concerned to give the voters a range of options...but not too many options so as not to overload the voters? Vice Chairman McLatchy responded that this is still being sorted out.
- **Julie Shippee** informed the Select Board that she is interested in the Police Chief's position. The Select Board asked that she submit a letter of interest and resume.
- **Myra Carlow** asked if there would be a town vote as to whether the town wants to rebuild a school. Selectman Wilson responded that yes, town meeting is the only one that can appropriate the insurance funds to build a school.

Hurricane Sandy Update: Emergency Management Director Ed May reported that everything went very well during the event. Rowe sustained no damage to speak of. Trees or branches down on all roadways, but the DPW did a good job of clearing the debris. Approximately ½ of the town lost power, which was restored in a reasonable time (24 hours or so). National Grid had to wait until the high winds subsided before they could send out crews, which is why it took 24 hours. Police officers were out most of the night checking on road conditions. Ed did pump out one basement that had 6" of water, using a portable generator. Fire Department assisted a household by removing a tree in their yard which had fallen over their vehicle (did not damage vehicle). Ed ran a generator for another elderly household during the evening. All-in-all Rowe—as well as the entire area—was spared during the event. It was agreed to hold a debriefing on Thursday, Nov 1st at 4pm. Selectman Wilson will contact the Emergency Management Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief and DPW Superintendent.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP): Selectman Wilson asked where the town's CEMP was. Ellen Miller stated that it had been on the Selectmen's desk for many years (large binder). It may have been moved to the storage room when the Selectmen cleaned their office. Ms. Wilson stated that the plan is supposed to be available on the town's website. She stated that area towns (Heath and Charlemont) have the plans on their websites. Ms. Miller will see if she can find/develop an electronic version to place on the website.

Emergency Generator at School Site: Ed May stated that he would like to get power to the emergency diesel generator building so that he can run it periodically during the winter. There is presently no meter at the school site.

Tax Classification Hearing: At 6:15pm the Tax Classification Hearing convened. Board of Assessors Rick Williams (Chair) and Heidi Cousineau joined the meeting. They presented their recommendation of a Minimum Residential Factor (MRF) of .500019—which is the maximum allowable shift. This will result in tax rates of \$6.29 Residential & \$14.07 CIP Commercial-Industrial-Personal Property). (FY12 tax rates were \$5.16 & \$11.19.) Without a split tax rate the FY13 rate would be \$12.59. At the recommendation of the Board of Assessors, the Select Board voted unanimously (2/0/0) to adopt a Minimum Residential Factor (MRF) of .500019. The Board of Assessors were thanked for all of their work during the past year, which involved a considerable amount of time working on interim revaluations of the Bear Swamp and TransCanada properties. Both entities had filed abatements last spring, stating that they believed they were over-valued. These abatements were denied by all three towns involved (Rowe, Monroe and Florida). One entity did file an appeal with the Appellate Tax Board, which it later withdrew. The end result was that Rowe offered to conduct an interim year appraisal update of their values for FY2013, which resulted in a valuation decrease of \$28 million. [These values will be used for FY2014 also. The next revaluation is in FY2015.] This—coupled with the one-time \$320K capital expenditure exclusion to pay off the ESCO lease—is the main reason for the jump in FY13 tax rates. The Assessors reported that there was considerable new growth (\$28,000) largely due to upgrades by NEPCO, two new dwellings, and a large addition to one dwelling. Mr. Williams reported that Bear Swamp has agreed to their new value for next year (FY2014) as well, but that TransCanada is not as happy. In discussions with the DOR they advised Rowe Assessors that if these entities file for abatements next spring that the town not back down, and let the utilities take the matter to the ATB. The DOR believes the values are appropriate.

Mr. Williams stated that the next step needed in order to issue tax bills is the DOR's approval of the tax rates adopted this evening. This cannot happen until all information in the state's Gateway system is completed. There are several forms (7) that need to be completed by the town accountant. Mr. Williams stated that several emails have been sent to Joyce Muka asking that these forms be completed, but she has not responded. Selectman Wilson will contact Ms. Muka immediately to ascertain the status.

School Committee: The School Committee (Chair Lisa Miller, Lisa Danek-Burke and Cindy Laffond) joined the Selectboard at their conference table at 6:57pm to discuss several items.

- **Demolition Bid Specs:** Selectman Wilson stated that last Thursday (10/25) Tom Donaldson of MIIA said the bid specs should be ready in 2 weeks, and that winter season should not impact demolition activities. Lisa Danek-Burke stated that MIIA's estimate listed demolition costs of \$256,000 to demolish site down to the existing cement foundation. What if it is decided to remove everything, including the foundation? Ellen Miller explained that this estimate was only for rebuilding an identical structure on the site, using the current foundation; and that Mr. Donaldson stated that MIIA will include in their bid specs the possibility of removing the entire structure, including the foundation, as that is another option they town may decide on.
- **Boiler:** There was discussion of salvaging the recently installed new boiler and storing it for future use. Perhaps it should be shrink-wrapped.
- **Laptops, MacBooks, SmartBoards:** The School Committee will talk with Supt. Buonoconti about the possible reuse of these items. The equipment should be evaluated to determine their value/usefulness. Some items may perhaps be obsolete.
- **Additional School Bus:** The School Committee stated that they approved an additional bus for the elementary students as some of the students are now riding the bus more than one hour each way. This is not allowable for elementary age students. Also, adding this bus will allow the school day to transition back to the normal time—8:30am to 3:15pm. At this time the school day is 8:45am to 3:30pm. The Select Board voted unanimously (2/0/0) to approve their request for an additional bus. The cost for this bus (\$269.75/day) will be paid by the "Loss of Income" portion of our insurance coverage; i.e., there will be no cost to the town and no decrement of the "blanket" policy covering the school building/contents. [If the additional bus were to start on Nov 5th, the cost would be approximately \$35,000 for the remainder of this school year.]
- **Inventory:** Principal Knittle stated he would have this ready next week.

- **Three District Agreement:** Chair Lisa Miller stated that the three school committee chairs have been working on the new 3DA. The new agreement needs to be in place by June 30th. At this time the proposal is to keep the percentages the same as the current agreement. The current agreement (and proposed new agreement) allows for periodic time studies; however, none have been conducted to date. She is concerned that the other two committees may opt for a study in the near future which would be skewed by any time/effort expended by the Central Office due to the Rowe School fire. She hopes that if in fact a time study is undertaken, that any extra time expended for the fire be excluded as an “unusual event.”
- **Use of Property:** The School Committee reported that at their last meeting (Oct 24th) they voted unanimously (3/0/0) to use the property as a school.
- **Demolition:** The School Committee reported that at their last meeting (Oct 24th) they voted unanimously (3/0/0) to demolish the remains of the school building.
- **School Building Committee:** The two committees agreed to meet on Friday, Nov 7th, to discuss/appoint the members of the School Building Committee. Although the appointment is made by the Select Board, they will look to the School Committee for their recommendations. Ellen Miller will get to the School Committee the list of individuals interested in being appointed to the committee and any letters of interest they have supplied.
- **School Forum:** There was discussion that the School Building Committee should be the entity to hold the School Forum. No decision was made at this time.
- **Purchase Orders:** School Committee member Lisa Danek-Burke stated that from now on the Central Office will be tracking purchases via their PO system. She stated that Business Administrator Joanne Blier was wondering why there wasn't more than one account set up. Ellen Miller stated that the town has no authorization to spend any funds on fire-related matters other than the one deficit account approved by the DOR DLS Director of Accounts [under MGL c44, §31]. To expend funds from any other account would not be legal.

Police Chief Succession Study: There are no funds appropriated for any possible study. Ellen Miller will ask Chief Dandeneau if his Police Dept Operations budget could handle this cost.

Cultural Council: Member Meghan McLatchy has not yet resigned. Mr. McLatchy will again remind her to send in her resignation if that is her intention.

Dog Officer: The Select Board voted unanimously (2/0/0) to appoint Arthur Samuelson of 112 Ford Hill Road as the new Dog Officer.

Broadband Committee: The Select Board voted unanimously (2/0/0) to appoint Dan Wessman (37 Davenport Branch Rd), Russ Jolly (19 Stone Rd) and David Dvore (75 Potter Rd) to the Broadband Committee.

Certificate of Award: A Certificate of Award to BPVS for the DPW Solar Array was approved. This document is needed so that BPVS can obtain the required Payment Bond for the project. Once the Payment Bond is received, the signed contract will be issued to BPVS.

Municipal Audit: Selectman Wilson stated that since we had a change in the treasurer's position, the town is required to have a municipal audit done. She will look into this.

Council on Aging State Grant: FY2013 COA state grant in the amount of \$3500 was approved/signed.

Minutes: The following action was taken on meeting minutes:

- **October 9th:** Unanimously (2/0/0) approved as amended.
- **October 16th:** HOLD. Selectman Wilson emailed changes to Ellen Miller and the Select Board. Both Ms. Miller and Vice Chairman McLatchy stated they could not open the document she sent. She will forward her changes again.
- **October 23rd:** Unanimously (2/0/0) approved as amended.
- **October 27th:** Unanimously (2/0/0) approved as written.
- **October 29th:** Unanimously (2/0/0) approved as written.

ZBA:

- **Citizen Planner Event:** Ms. Wilson stated that she would like to attend two Citizen Planner events being held in eastern MA in her capacity as ZBA member. The cost is \$30 for each event. Mr. McLatchy signed off on the registration form. She will pay for this and request reimbursement.
- **Declined Appointment:** Mr. McLatchy noted that Lenny Laffond did not accept his reappointment to serve on the ZBA this year. There is a vacancy on the board.

Adjournment: The Selectboard voted unanimously (2/0/0) to adjourn their meeting at 8:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen B. Miller
Town Coordinator

Approved:

(Absent)
Noel R. Abbott, Chairman

P. J. McLatchy
Paul McLatchy III, Vice Chairman

Marilyn Wilson
Marilyn Wilson

December 14, 2012
Date Approved

Attachments:

- Agenda
- Tax Classification Hearing – BOA recommendations
- BPVS Certificate of Award
- COA State Grant contract